



**Report on the use of LPG
as a domestic cooking fuel option
in India**

Prepared by

Antonette D'Sa and K.V. Narasimha Murthy
International Energy Initiative – Asian Regional Initiative
(IEI-Asia)

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Abstract

According to the Census of India (2001), nearly 91% of rural households depend on traditional fuels (chiefly fuel-wood, animal and crop waste and charcoal) for cooking. It is well known that these fuels have adverse effects – to individuals, in terms of the health effects (of smoke inhalation, the emission of unburned hydrocarbons through traditional stoves, and soot deposits when washed off vessels, etc.) and the time on fuel gathering, and to the community through the ambient pollution created by simultaneous cook-fires and land degradation in cases where fuel-wood is gathered in an unsustainable manner.

Thus far, the thermal (cooking) needs of the population have not been adequately addressed. LPG can be considered as one of the “clean” fuel options, vis-à-vis traditional fuels available to homes; moreover, LPG stoves are more efficient than even “improved” biomass-based stoves. There are other important alternatives to traditional cooking fuels in the form of modernised biomass-fuels; however, the use of LPG is being considered as a short/medium term option, i.e. a transition fuel (or a complement) to bio-based fuels.

In the report, we have enumerated the requirements for and barriers to increased adoption of LPG for cooking in the rural and semi-urban areas of India, based on the data collected and a survey of the available literature. Considering scenarios with different proportions of cooking requirement to be met, we have estimated the possible increase in demand. An appropriate supply network has now to be tracked. Supply data has been very difficult to procure as the Public Sector organisations are in the throes of government disinvestments (privatisation). There also appear to be several problems regarding increased LPG use in rural and semi-urban areas, particularly with regard to accessibility and availability -- the supply, storage and distribution network. These challenges have to be adequately addressed through policy options.

The experiences with the expansion of LPG use in other countries and with LPG/other cooking fuel programmes in India have also been considered, to derive factors that would either help or inhibit the successful implementation of LPG use programmes.

Keywords: LPG, domestic energy use, cooking fuel, avoided biomass use, Indian rural energy use

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For further details, contact:

**International Energy Initiative – Asian Regional Initiative (IEI-Asia),
80-B Spencer Road, 2nd Cross, Fraser Town,
Bangalore 560005, India**

E-mail: ieiblr@iei-asia.org

Web site: www.iei-asia.org